

MONTANA AND THE SKY



Left to Right, Ron Litton, Al Peitch, Frank Bass, Dusty Rhodes, and Al Newby in attendance at the Beacon Star Antique Airfield Fly-In.

Vol. 29, No. 9

MONTANA AERONAUTICS DIVISION

September, 1978

CUT BANK FSS

Effective September 7, 1978, Cut Bank Flight Service Station will experience periodic closures from 2200 to 0600. Due to a shortage in personnel there will be short periods of time when the FSS hours of operation will be limited.

The Cut Bank control zone is effective during specific dates and times established in advance by a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM). The effective date and time thereafter will be published in the Airport Facility Directory.

LOG BOOKS—WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Few pilots think of themselves as historians. And yet, in a certain sense every pilot must be a historian of sorts. The Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Parts 43 and 91 contain specifics for the kinds of records which must be kept, and how and by whom they must be maintained.

Whenever a mechanic performs maintenance or alterations on an aircraft, he is required to furnish the

owner or operator with a brief written description of what was done. However, the owner or operator is responsible for making certain that a proper record of such service is maintained. The phrase, "owner or operator" here is understood to mean that the party contractually responsible for maintaining the aircraft at a given time. Where an aircraft is leased, for example, the person leasing it could be the operator and have the responsibility, rather than the owner.

On some occasions the pilot may be neither the owner nor the operator, but he nevertheless has responsibility for the airworthiness of the aircraft. The pilot-in-command is responsible for determining whether the aircraft is in condition for safe flight (FAR 91.29). This does not mean that he must read the service record before each flight, but it does mean that he should know the status of inspections and recent maintenance.

The paperwork involved in keeping up a good and thorough set of aircraft records can be an unappealing chore. But it is a task that will save you both time and money.

(Ellitt Flying Service Newsletter)

MPA BIG FALL FLY-IN

The Montana Pilots Association is sponsoring their fall fly-in September 30 and October 1, 1978, at the Chico Hot Springs Resort.

This will be the first fly-in held at the resort and activities will include swimming, horseback riding, games and live music for entertainment. Rates are very reasonable for those who wish to stay at the Lodge. The facilities will include camp sites and barbeque areas for those who choose to "rough it."

Reservations may be made by contacting Chico Hot Springs, P.O. Box 127, Pray, MT 59605—(406) 333-4411. Call early for your choice of accommodations.

If you are driving, take US 89 south from Livingston. Proceed south approximately 25 miles and watch for signs. If you are flying, there is a private landing strip at intersection of 195° radial from Livingston VOR and 119° radial from Bozeman VOR (Yellowstone Guest Ranch). Contact Chico unicom 122.8.



ADMINISTRATOR'S COLUMN

It was with a great deal of pleasure that I was invited to ride Big Sky Airlines inaugural flight into Kalispell September 11. The flight was most enjoyable and even though the instrument weather conditions prevailed, it did not detract from the excellent in-flight service provided by stewardess Terry Metier. Captains Chuck Flanagan and John Poling provided an outstanding ride through the entire flight and instrument landings. The Big Sky Handley Page Jet Stream aircraft are pressurized prop jets and provide the comforts experienced in the larger air carriers.

My congratulations to President Dean Sparkman and the entire Big Sky Airlines staff.

* * * * *

The Montana Aeronautics Board met on September 7, 1978, to take action on several airline related matters. The Board reviewed Alaska Airlines' application which is before the Civil Aeronautics Board to service the intermediate points of Missoula, Great Falls and Billings between the proposed Seattle-Minneapolis-Washington, D.C. route. The Board decided to support the route application, however, to wait and review other airline applications before deciding which specific airlines they may wish to support.

Western Airlines has notified the Board that they intend to file before the deadline date of October 2. The Board's position is that comparative east-west service through Montana is essential in assuring that Montana air travelers receive adequate and flexible air service.

The Board met with officials from Wyoming Airlines to get an update regarding that company's ongoing commuter airline activity in Wyoming. Wyoming Airlines' application to tie their Wyoming routes to Billings is still pending before the Board and as soon as Star Aviation has submitted their brief in response to recent documents received by Wyoming Airlines, hearing officer, James A. Steffek, will submit his findings to the Board. Final action by the Board should be completed by early October.

Big Sky Airlines President Dean Sparkman appeared before the Board requesting route flexibility between communities Big Sky is now authorized to serve. The Board indicated that they would act favorably on the request, however, they asked Mr. Sparkman to formalize his request specifying his desired routes and scheduling changes

and then they would take action on his request at the next Board meeting.

The Board also decided to support Frontier Airlines in their application to extend service from Billings to Helena. The new service proposal will allow Helena travelers one stop through plane service to Denver and return daily.

* * * * *

I attended the Old West Regional Commission meeting in Rapid City, South Dakota on August 24. An update of the airline regulatory reform legislation, now pending before congress, was presented. Of primary concern is how this bill will effect small community air service if the Civil Aeronautics Board certificated air carrier is allowed free exit. The Commission strongly endorses a provision whereby commuter airlines will be subsidy eligible in taking over the small community markets when vacated by the certificated air carriers.

* * * * *

We received notice on August 21 from the Federal Aviation Administration, reference Airspace Docket 78-RM-22, that the Cut Bank Flight Service Station operational hours will be periodically closed between 2200 and 0600 hours (see article). This comes as a surprise in view of what we consider a congressional mandate prohibiting such action. We have been in communication with our congressional delegate in Washington, D.C. opposing this action.



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THURBER'S HELENA



CALENDAR

September 25-29—Aircraft Crash and Rescue School, Great Falls. For further info call (406) 761-7885.

September 25-29—NASAO Annual Meeting, Indianapolis, IN.

October 1—Yellowstone Airport closes for the season.

October 2-4—American Association of Airport Executives' Annual Airports Conference, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.

October 6-8—Montana Flying Farmers Convention, Havre.

October 7-8—Montana Antique Aircraft Association Fly-In, Ennis. Contact Pat Johnson, Helena, 458-5429, for further information.

October 12-15—Third Annual Mid-America Fly-In and Annual Membership Meeting of National Pilots Association, Point Lookout, Missouri.

October 24-26—Aviation Maintenance Foundation, First Annual Symposium, Oklahoma City, OK—Contact Richard Kost, P.O. Box 739, Basin, WY 82410, (307) 568-2466.

October 28—Second Annual Great Falls to Jackpot "Halloween Air Race." Contact Patti Thompson, 2824 Fourth Avenue South, Great Falls 59405.



MAG CHECKS

By: Dale Uppinghouse

Accident Prevention Specialist

Sometimes we go on doing things not really knowing why, just because "that's the way we were told." Magneto checks might be a case in point. The term is a misnomer. What we are really checking is the entire ignition system.

The check should be done after the engine is warm. Then, the important thing is to note the amount and speed, or lag, or RPM drop. A fast RPM drop usually indicates a faulty plug, ignition harness, or magneto. They have an immediate effect on power output.

Slow drop is usually caused by incorrect timing. Aha! now we are really checking the mags, right? Well, maybe, although the same symptom could apply to an incorrect fuel mixture. An

incorrect fuel mixture could affect one or more cylinders and show up as a slow drop.

How many times has the good mag been removed from an engine because we smart pilots identified the wrong mag to that stupid mechanic? More times than we like to remember. Even mechanics have been known to do this. Take time to be sure and save yourself some money.

While we are about it, what is happening when we move the mag switch to the left or right? We are grounding out the **other** mag, right? When the switch is turned clear to the OFF position, the engine should stop. If it doesn't, we have a faulty ground wire (P-Lead) or possibly a bad switch. It could hurt or kill someone if the mag is always "HOT," no matter which way the switch is placed. A ground safety check should be done by all pilots just before shut down for the day. It might just prevent someone losing some fingers when they are pulling the prop through before the next flight.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

(Section 4369, Title 39, U.S. Code)

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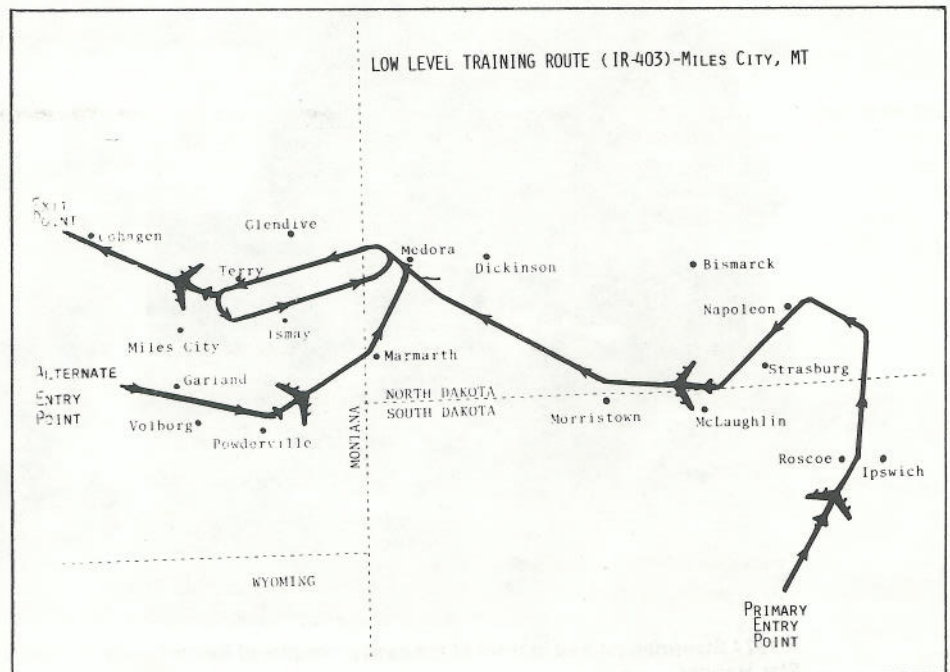
Editor: Paula Lindsey.

Circulation: 2,600 average copies per month.

SAC BOMBERS TO FLY NEW ROUTE

Strategic Air Command B-52 and FB-111 bombers will fly a new low level training route in South Dakota, North Dakota and Montana, beginning August 1. The route will be used until July 10, 1979.

The bombers will fly the training route at subsonic speeds along a center line of an eight mile wide corridor at altitudes ranging from 400 to 2,200 feet above the ground. These aircraft do not carry bombs on the training flights. All bombing is simulated and radar scored by ground based scoring sites. Radar bomb scoring equipment will be located near New England, N.D. and Fallon, Mont. These sites, using radio and radar signals, measure the accuracy of simulated bomb releases and simulated launching of short range attack missiles.



BEACON STAR ANTI



It's obvious by this picture what a tremendous turn out and success the Beacon Star Antique Airfield fly-in was.



A 1927 Stearman parked in front of the newly remodeled Beacon Star Hangar.

There are still people talking about the fantastic two-day antique and classic airplane fly-in and air show held July 15 and 16 at Frank Bass' Beacon Star Antique Airfield near Moore, Montana, southwest of Lewistown.

The event drew close to 1,500 people and over 80 aircraft, old and new, from all parts of the continent.

There was an award presented for the best antique plane which went to Skeeter and Doris Carlson, Spokane, and an award for the rarest plane which went to Jack and Joy Rose, also of Spokane.

Some of the fly-in activities included a fly-in breakfast, free camping facilities, and free swimming in the Bass' indoor pool. A no-host steak fry was followed by a dance with Dixieland music by the Hertz Combo of Lewistown featuring the slide trombone of John "Spinach" Ennis of Los Angeles, California.

The Montana State University Parachute Demonstration team opened the air show Sunday afternoon. They were followed by Al Peitch, Minot, N.D., in a Starduster 2, "Gentleman" Jim Leahy, Galesburg, Ill., in a stock Navy Stearman, and Al Newby "The Flying Grandfather," Belgrade, in an original Great Lakes Trainer. They all performed aerial acrobatics to the delight of the crowd.

The Beacon Star hangar was formerly a barn which was recently converted. The air show marked the completion and the grand opening of the hangar.

During the fly-in Frank Bass was elected president of the newly formed Montana Antique Aircraft Association. Other officers elected at that time were Al Newby, Belgrade, Vice President; and Merrill Winstead, Stanford, Secretary-Treasurer.

Bob Taylor, president of the National Antique Aircraft Association, Blakesburg, Iowa, spoke at the organizational meeting and was on hand to help establish the state chapter.

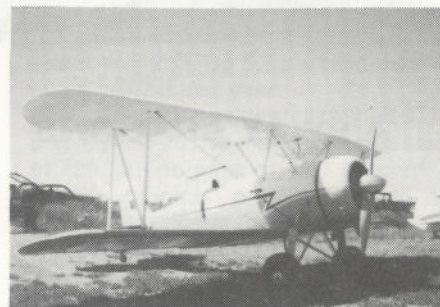
QUE AIRFIELD FLY-IN



Host Frank Bass in front of a 1929 Kari Keen.



Kent Peitch's 1937 Interstate Cadet.



Al Newby's 1932 Great Lakes Trainer.



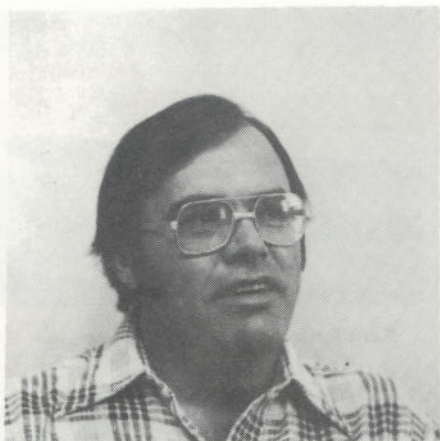
George Colby, Kalispell, brought this 1928 Curtis Robin to the fly-in.



Jack and Joy Rose, Spokane, received an award for the rarest plane in attendance with this 1931 Pitcairn Mailwing.



The Montana State University Parachute Demonstration Team provided smiles and spectacular air demonstration on Sunday.



AIRWAY BEACONS

By: **Dave Kneedler**, Chief
Airport/Airways Bureau

Airway beacon lights which flash from various mountaintops throughout western Montana are viewed by many as having gone the way of the Model T. Although these beacons comprised aviation's first "navigational system" the advent of electronic navigation has indeed made them less crucial.

There was a time, many years ago, when 56 beacons marked airways across Montana from border to border, east to west and north to south. Today this number has been reduced to 20 (17 Aeronautics Division owned and 3 operated by the FAA) located at points which are considered strategic spots.

The beacons in our system numbered 12 in the beginning and that amount has gradually increased through the acquisition of additional beacons along the Montana-Idaho border and other FAA beacons within the state. From this you can see that we don't agree with those who have labeled the airway beacon obsolete. We view them as a valuable backup and as very useful during the night VFR flight in determining visibility, etc.

Our system has proven to be very efficient and economical to operate—a cost analysis made in 1974 showed an annual expense, including all labor, materials, travel, etc., of approximately \$300 per beacon. Although this figure has undoubtedly increased substantially since, we feel that the relatively nominal expense is well justified. The addition of stabilizing transformers and



Power shed and line leading up to the Homestake Pass Beacon, east of Butte.

photo-electric controls allows us to visit the sites only four times per year.

The latest addition to our system is the Homestake Pass beacon east of Butte, a photo of which appears with this article. In addition, we have expressed to the FAA in Denver an interest in acquiring their remaining three beacons should they choose to decommission them. They are located on Bozeman Pass, east of Bozeman, McDonald Pass, west of Helena and University Mountain, east of Missoula.

If you have any comments or thoughts regarding our airway beacon system and its value or lack thereof, we would appreciate receiving them.

A LOOK BACK AT DENSITY ALTITUDE

By: **Ted Mathis**, Manager
Yellowstone Airport

With fall comes cooler temperatures and we at Yellowstone Airport can breath a little easier as the density altitude drops. This summer we lost one aircraft in the park due in part to high density altitude and had several close calls at the airport.

There was one gentleman in a Cherokee Archer who tried to take-off with the temperature around the high 80's and density altitude near 10,000

feet. He had full fuel and a heavy load. After a long take-off run he managed to get the thing in the air, only to have it stall and settle back on the runway. Fortunately, he was able to stop before he ran off the end of the runway. After an experience like that you would think that the pilot would taxi back, tie the aircraft down and either remove some of the load, or wait for cooler temperatures. Not this pilot! He taxied back and tried it all over again. This time he was able to get the aircraft airborne and we watched as he churned around the valley at tree top level until he found enough lift to climb.

We saw several similar incidents throughout this year involving everything from 150's to 707's. Density altitude effects aircraft rather indiscriminately. It doesn't care how many horsepower or pilot ratings you have. If you overload your aircraft on a hot day at a high altitude airport you're in for trouble.

PILOT AIDS

Montana Aeronautical Chart..	\$2.00
Montana Airport Directory:	
Loose leaf binder.....	\$1.00
Insert.....	\$1.00
Subscription—	
Monthly Newsletter.....	\$1.50

CENTERLINE



By: **Jim White**, Chief
Air Transportation Bureau

No Acceptable Excuse for Gross Overload

The safety board has targeted the weight-and-balance accident as a continuing general aviation hazard for which there is "no acceptable excuse."

Citing a fatal accident in which a drastically overloaded Cessna 207 crashed in Georgia last March, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) also produced figures showing such accidents have not decreased in the last decade.

Between 35 and 50 of these crashes have occurred regularly every year since 1968, the board said. Too, about 40 percent of weight-and-balance accidents are fatal. This is a much higher rate than the over-all picture, where only about 16 percent of all accidents are fatal.

In the cited instance, last March 30 at DeKalb Peachtree Airport, Atlanta, a young air taxi cargo pilot crashed almost immediately after take-off with a cargo of some 1,944 pounds. Considering useful load and fuel, the board figured the plane was about 790 pounds over maximum gross weight and had a center of gravity considerably behind the aft limit.

The pilot, who died in the crash and fire, was 23 years old and held commercial, instructor and instrument tickets and 2,750 hours.

The board related:

"The operator of the Cessna had regularly scheduled cargo flight from Atlanta to Augusta at 5:30 a.m. each weekday. On March 29 they received a 1,944 pound cargo shipment for Augusta that would necessitate an extra flight to Augusta on March 30. The operator's employees loaded a portion of the shipment on the afternoon of March 29.

"Some 700 to 800 pounds of the shipment was left in their panel truck for the regular 5:30 flight. Later on, one of the operator's other pilots said he observed that the panel truck was brought around from the front of the office and backed up to the side of the Cessna. He was unable to provide any further information because he was busy with his own flight arrangements."

However, a board source said it was established that the entire shipment was loaded aboard. The source also said the 207 pilot was observed making two or three phone calls, possibly to complain about the cargo, and investigators believe he was aware of the overload.

The pilot attempted take-off at about 1:38 a.m. after he obtained an instrument clearance from Atlanta Approach, since the DeKalb tower was closed. Leaving runway 16, the plane hit treetops, banked sharply right and struck in a wooded lot about 2,400 feet off runway's end. Available evidence indicates the engine was producing full power.

The cause was ascribed as "inadequate preflight preparation" by the pilot, but the board said an "operational supervisory personnel deficiency" was a factor.

NTSB voiced concern at the "persistent reoccurrence of weight-and-balance type accidents in general aviation."

The board said two points from its 10-year review are significant: "The pilot was directly involved in the casual area of almost every accident," and "the accident record remained relatively constant and unchanged."

NTSB added, "There is no acceptable excuse for this situation, and it must be corrected."

The board targeted weight-and-balance as it released its second volume of "briefs," reporting on general aviation accidents for 1977.

In addition, NTSB noted that the pamphlet, "Weight and Balance" (NTSN-PAM-74-1) is available free

from the Publications Section, NTSB, Washington, D.C. 20594. Complete details about weight-and-balance are also found in FAA Advisory Circular 91-23, and in most airplane manuals.

Accident Rate Up Dramatically First Six Months

The general aviation accident rate has reversed the downward trend of last year and shown a dramatic rise for the first six months of 1978, according to the FAA.

Using preliminary figures, total accidents for the first half of the year now stand at 2,263, up 8.9 percent over the same period last year.

Worse, fatal accidents reached 377—a 17.4 percent rise—and fatalities stand at 728, an increase of 14.1 percent.

FAA officials point out that the figures are preliminary and some accidents could be reclassified as incidents on investigation. But the FAA also concedes that the most disturbing figures—on fatal accidents and fatalities—aren't likely to be affected by revisions.

Personal flying account for the largest share. This year there have been 1,253 accidents in that category. 242 of them fatal and involving 466 fatalities. Last year there were 1,108 accidents; 202 fatal and 407 deaths.

Second comes business flying, which this year has produced 263 accidents; 53 fatal and 93 fatalities. Last year in the same period, there were 266 accidents, 36 of them fatal.

Aircraft Insurance

We have heard about a report from the owner of a fine aircraft which was severely damaged in a landing accident, after which the insurance company refused to pay the claim.

The refusal to pay was based on the fact that the aircraft had been loaned to a pilot friend who in no way met the requirements of the insurance "pilot clause."

Insurance pilot clauses can be written so that coverage exists with either "named" pilots, or via various forms of "open pilot" clauses extend coverage provided the pilot involved meets various requirements such as specific type of license, minimum number of hours of total flight time,

(Continued on Page 8)

minimum hours of time in the aircraft type, make, model, etc., minimum number of hours of instrument or flight instructor time.

Please for your own good when you insure your aircraft carefully read the "pilot clause" in the insurance policy and then adhere to it. Insurance companies will not, nor are they by law bound to extend their coverages beyond those stipulated in the policy. The aircraft owner cannot in any way, for the sake of friendship or any other reason, extend the liability of the insurance company beyond that spelled out in the policy.

There are many conditions in every insurance policy. Always be certain you read the policy and understand its conditions and limitations, and then be sure you remain within their bounds.



HOT CASH. A report from British Airways alerts air travelers and crew members that if they carry small transistor batteries in pocket or purse, they should be segregated from metal to avoid possible shorting. In the incident in question, an airliner was three hours into the flight when a female passenger complained to a steward that her purse was getting very hot. Investigation revealed that a smoking nine-volt battery in her purse was the source of the heat, and that some coins in her purse were also quite hot to the touch. Seems the passenger had removed the battery from a portable radio and dropped it into the coin compartment of her purse. The battery-short follow-

ed. Battery manufacturer confirmed that a fresh nine-volt battery — if shorted by a coin — could generate enough heat to cause a fire, or cause the battery to explode.



Engine power loss, currently the most common type of general aviation aircraft accidents, is the subject of a new advisory circular based on a three-year review of such accidents by the FAA. The various causes of power loss and means of avoiding them are discussed in AC No. 20-155, "Engine Power-Loss Accident Prevention," available free from the DOT/FAA Distribution Unit, M-443.1, Washington, D.C. 20590.

MEMBER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE AVIATION OFFICIALS

PURPOSE—"To foster aviation, as an industry, as a mode of transportation for persons and property and as an arm of the national defense; to join with the Federal Government and other groups in **research, development, and advancement of aviation**; to develop uniform laws and regulations; and to otherwise encourage co-operation and mutual aid among the several states."



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